Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power

Byung-Chul Han

PSYCHO-POLITICS

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Protect me from what I want.
Jenny Holzer

1.
The Crisis of Freedom

The Exploitation of Freedom

Freedom will prove to have been merely an interlude. Freedom is felt when passing from one way of living to another – until this too turns out to be a form of coercion. Then, liberation gives way to renewed subjugation. Such is the destiny of the *subject*; literally, the 'one who has been cast down'.

Today, we do not deem ourselves subjugated *subjects*, but rather *projects*: always refashioning and reinventing ourselves. A sense of freedom attends passing from the state of subject to that of project. All the same, this projection amounts to a form of compulsion and constraint – indeed, to a *more efficient kind of subjectivation and subjugation*. As a project deeming itself free of external and alien limitations, the *I* is now subjugating itself to internal limitations and self-constraints, which are taking the form of compulsive achievement and optimization.

We are living in a particular phase of history: freedom itself is bringing forth compulsion and constraint. The freedom of *Can* generates even more coercion than the disciplinarian *Should*, which issues commandments and prohibitions. *Should* has a limit. In contrast, *Can* has none. Thus, the compulsion entailed by *Can* is unlimited. And so we find ourselves in a paradoxical situation. Technically, freedom means the opposite of coercion and compulsion. Being free means being free from constraint. But now freedom itself, which is supposed to be the opposite of constraint, is

producing coercion. Psychic maladies such as depression and burnout express a profound crisis of freedom. They represent pathological signs that freedom is now switching over into manifold forms of compulsion.

Although the achievement-subject deems itself free, in reality it is a slave. In so far as it willingly exploits itself without a master, it is an *absolute slave*. There is no master forcing the achievement-subject to work. Yet all the same, it is absolutizing *bare life* and *labour*. Bare life and labour form two sides of the same coin. Health represents the ideal of bare life. Today's neoliberal slave lacks the sovereignty – indeed, the freedom – of the master who, according to Hegel's dialectic, performs no labour at all and *only enjoys*. For Hegel, the *sovereignty of the master* derives from his rising above bare life and risking death itself in the process. Such *excess* – living and enjoying beyond measure – is alien to the slave, who worries only about bare life. But counter to what Hegel assumed, labouring does not make the slave free. The slave remains enslaved to labour. Now, the slave is forcing the master to work too. Today's dialectic of master and slave means the totalization of labour.

As the entrepreneur of its own self, the neoliberal subject has no capacity for relationships with others that might be *free of purpose*. Nor do entrepreneurs know what purpose-free friendship would even look like. Originally, being free meant *being among friends*. 'Freedom' and 'friendship' have the same root in Indo-European languages. Fundamentally, freedom signifies a *relationship*. A real feeling of freedom occurs only in a fruitful relationship – when being with others brings happiness. But today's neoliberal regime leads to utter isolation; as such, it does not really free us at all. Accordingly, the question now is whether we need to redefine freedom – to reinvent it – in order to escape from the fatal dialectic that is changing freedom into coercion.

Neoliberalism represents a highly efficient, indeed an intelligent, system for exploiting freedom. Everything that belongs to practices and expressive forms of liberty – emotion, play and communication – comes to be exploited. It is inefficient to exploit people against their will. Allo-exploitation yields scant returns. Only when freedom is exploited are returns maximized.

It is interesting to note that Marx also defines freedom in terms of a successful relationship to others: 'Only in community [with others does each] individual [have] the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions;

only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possible.'[1] From this perspective, being free means nothing other than *self-realization with others*. Freedom is synonymous with a working community (i.e., a successful one).

For Marx, individual freedom represents a ruse – a trick of capital. 'Free competition', which is based on the idea of individual freedom, simply amounts to the 'relation of capital to itself as another capital, i.e., the real conduct of capital as capital'.[2] Capital reproduces by entering into relations with itself as another form of Capital: through free competition. It copulates with the Other of itself by way of individual freedom. Capital grows inasmuch as people engage in free competition. Hereby, individual freedom amounts to servitude inasmuch as Capital lays hold of it and uses it for its own propagation. That is, Capital exploits individual freedom in order to breed: 'It is not the individuals who are set free by free competition; it is, rather, capital which is set free.'[3]

The *freedom of Capital* achieves self-realization by way of individual freedom. In the process, individuals degrade into the genital organs of Capital. Individual freedom lends it an 'automatic' subjectivity of its own, which spurs it to reproduce actively. In this way, Capital continuously 'brings forth living offspring'.[4] Today, individual freedom is taking on excessive forms; ultimately, this amounts to nothing other than the *excess of Capital itself*.

The Dictatorship of Capital

At a certain level of development, according to Marx, the forces of production (human labour, modes of work and the material means available) come into conflict with the dominant relations of production (conditions of ownership and domination). Contradiction arises because the forces of production never stop evolving. Thus, industrialization brings forth new forces of production that come into conflict with structures of ownership and government that still resemble feudal conditions. In turn, this contradiction entails social crises: pushes to change the relations of production. For Marx, the contradiction is to be eliminated by way of the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie – which will bring forth a communist social order.

But counter to what Marx assumed, communist revolution cannot resolve the contradiction between forces of production and relations of production. The contradiction admits no dialectical *Aufhebung*. Capitalism can always escape into the future precisely because it harbours permanent and inherent contradiction. Accordingly, industrial capitalism has now *mutated* into neoliberalism and financial capitalism, which are implementing a post-industrial, immaterial mode of production – instead of turning into communism.

As a mutant form of capitalism, neoliberalism transforms workers into *entrepreneurs*. It is not communist revolution that is now abolishing the allo-exploited working class – instead, neoliberalism is in the course of doing so. Today, everyone is an *auto-exploiting labourer in his or her own enterprise*. People are now master and slave in one. Even class struggle has transformed into an *inner struggle against oneself*.

The cooperative 'Multitude' that Antonio Negri has exalted as the post-Marxist successor to the 'proletariat' does not describe the contemporary mode of production. Rather, conditions are defined by the *solitude* of an entrepreneur who is isolated and self-combating and practises auto-exploitation voluntarily. As such, it is a mistake to believe that the cooperative 'Multitude' will overthrow the parasitic 'Empire' and bring forth a communist social order. The Marxist scheme to which Negri adheres will prove to have been yet another illusion.

In fact, no proletariat exists under the neoliberal regime at all. There is no working class being exploited by those who own the means of production. When production is immaterial, everyone already owns the means of production him- or herself. The neoliberal system is no longer a class system in the proper sense. It does not consist of classes that display mutual antagonism. This is what accounts for the system's stability.

Today, the distinction between proletariat and bourgeoisie no longer holds either. Literally, 'proletarian' means someone whose sole possessions are his or her children: self-production is restricted to biological reproduction. But now the illusion prevails that every person – as a project free to fashion him- or herself at will – is capable of *unlimited self-production*. This means that a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is structurally impossible. Today, the Dictatorship of Capital rules over everyone.

The neoliberal regime transforms allo-exploitation into auto-exploitation; this process affects all 'classes'. Such classless self-

exploitation – which was something utterly unknown to Marx – renders impossible any social revolution based on the difference between the exploiters, on the one hand, and the exploited, on the other. Indeed, given the auto-exploiting achievement-subject's isolation, no *political We* is even possible that could rise up and undertake collective action.

People who fail in the neoliberal achievement-society see themselves as responsible for their lot and feel shame instead of questioning society or the system. Herein lies the particular intelligence defining the neoliberal regime: no resistance to the system can emerge in the first place. In contrast, when allo-exploitation prevails, the exploited are still able to show solidarity and unite against those who exploit them. Such is the logic on which Marx's idea of a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is based. However, this vision presupposes that relations of repression and domination hold. Now, under the neoliberal regime of auto-exploitation, people are turning their aggression *against themselves*. This auto-aggressivity means that the exploited are not inclined to revolution so much as depression.

In our world, we no longer work in order to satisfy our own needs. Instead, we work for Capital. Capital generates needs of its own; mistakenly, we perceive these needs as if they belonged to us. Capital therefore represents a new kind of *transcendence*, which entails a new form of subjectivation. We are being expelled from the sphere of lived immanence – where life relates to life instead of subjugating itself to external ends.

Emancipation from a transcendent order – that is, an order grounded in religious premises – is the hallmark of modern politics. Only under modern conditions – when transcendental means of justification no longer possess any validity – is a genuine politics, the politicization of society as a whole, held to be possible. Now, norms of action are supposed to be subject to negotiation at every level: transcendence will yield to *discourse immanent to society itself*. Society, the reasoning goes, can construct itself anew, purely from within, on the basis of *immanent* properties. However, such freedom vanishes just as soon as Capital achieves the status of being a *new transcendency* – a *new master*. When this occurs, politics lapses into servitude again. It becomes the handmaiden of Capital.

Do we really want to be free? Didn't we invent God so we wouldn't have to be free? Before God, we are all debtors: guilty (*schuldig*). But debt – guilt – destroys freedom. Today, politicians appeal to high debt rates to

explain that their freedom to act is massively restricted. Free from debt – that is, wholly free – we would truly have to *act*. Perhaps we run up debts perpetually so we won't need to do so – that is, so we won't need to be *free*, or *responsible*. Don't our debts prove that we don't have the power to be free? Could it be that Capital is a *new God*, making us guilty and debt-ridden again? Walter Benjamin held that capitalism is a religion. As he put it, capitalism represents the 'first case of a cult that creates guilt, not atonement' (*der erste Fall eines nicht entsühnenden, sondern verschuldenden Kultus*). Since there is no possibility of relieving debt and guilt, the state of unfreedom perpetuates itself: 'A vast sense of guilt that is unable to find relief seizes on the cult, not to atone for this guilt but to make it universal.'[5]

The Dictatorship of Transparency

Initially, the internet was celebrated as a medium of boundless liberty. Microsoft's early advertising slogan – 'Where do you want to go today?' – suggested unlimited freedom and mobility on the web. As it turned out, such euphoria was an illusion. Today, unbounded freedom and communication are switching over into total control and surveillance. More and more, social media resemble digital panoptica keeping watch over the social realm and exploiting it mercilessly. We had just freed ourselves from the disciplinary panopticon – then we threw ourselves into a new, and even more efficient, panopticon.

Jeremy Bentham's panopticon isolated inmates from each other for disciplinary purposes and prevented them from interacting. In contrast, the occupants of today's digital panopticon actively communicate with each other and willingly expose themselves. That is, they *collaborate* in the digital panopticon's operations. Digital control society makes intensive use of freedom. This can only occur thanks to voluntary self-illumination and self-exposure (*Selbstausleuchtung und Selbstentblößung*). Digital Big Brother *outsources* operations to inmates, as it were. Accordingly, data is not surrendered under duress so much as offered out of an inner need. That is why the digital panopticon proves so efficient.

Transparency is demanded in the name of the freedom of information too. In reality, however, this amounts to nothing other than a *neoliberal*

dispositive. It means turning everything inside out by force and transforming it into *information*. Under the immaterial mode of production that now prevails, more information and more communication mean more productivity, acceleration and growth. Information represents a positive value; inasmuch as it lacks interiority, it *can circulate independently, free from any and all context*. Accordingly, the circulation of information admits acceleration at will – for purely arbitrary reasons.

Secrets, foreignness and otherness represent impediments to unbounded communication. In the name of transparency, they are to be eliminated. Communication goes faster when it is smoothed out – that is, when thresholds, walls and gaps are removed. This also means stripping people of interiority, which blocks and slows down communication. However, such emptying-out of persons does not occur by violent means. Instead, it occurs as voluntary self-exposure. The negativity of otherness or foreignness is de-interiorized and transformed into the positivity of communicable and consumable difference: 'diversity'. The dispositive of transparency effects utter exteriorization in order to accelerate the circulation of information and speed communication. Ultimately, openness facilitates unrestricted communication – whereas closedness, reserve and interiority obstruct it.

The dispositive of transparency has the further consequence of promoting total conformity. The economy of transparency seeks to suppress deviation. Total networking – total communication – already has a levelling effect per se. Its effect is conformity: it is as if *everyone were watching over everyone else* – even before intelligence agencies or secret services have stepped in to supervise and steer. Invisible moderators smooth out communication and calibrate it to what is generally understood and accepted. Such *primary, intrinsic* surveillance proves much more problematic than the *secondary, extrinsic* surveillance undertaken by secret services and spying agencies.

Neoliberalism makes citizens into consumers. The freedom of the citizen yields to the passivity of the consumer. As consumers, today's voters have no real interest in politics – in actively shaping the community. They possess neither the will nor the ability to participate in communal, political action. *They react only passively* to politics: grumbling and complaining, as consumers do about a commodity or service they do not like. Politicians and parties follow this logic of consumption too. They have to *'deliver'*. In

the process, they become nothing more than suppliers; their task is to satisfy voters who are consumers or customers.

The *transparency* demanded of politicians today is anything but a *political* demand. Transparency is not called for in *political* decision-making processes; no consumer is interested in that. Instead, and above all, the imperative of transparency serves to expose or unmask politicians, to make them an item of scandal. The call for transparency presupposes occupying the position of a shocked spectator. It is not voiced by engaged citizens so much as by passive onlookers. Participation now amounts to grievance and complaint. With that, the society of transparency, inhabited by onlookers and consumers, has given rise to a *spectator democracy*.

An essential component of freedom is informational self-determination. The 1984 ruling on the census made by the German Federal Constitutional Court already declared: 'If citizens cannot know who knows what, when, and on what occasion about them, the right to informational self-determination is incompatible with social order and the legal order facilitating the same.'[6] That said, this ruling was made at a time when people commonly believed they were facing the State as an instance of domination, which wrested information from citizens against their will. Such a time is long past. Today, we voluntarily expose ourselves without any external constraint at all – without an edict commanding us to do so. Of our own free will, we put any and all conceivable information about ourselves on the internet, without having the slightest idea who knows what, when or on what occasion. This lack of control represents a crisis of freedom to be taken seriously. Indeed, given the data that people make available willy-nilly, the very idea of protecting privacy (*Datenschutz*) is becoming obsolete.

Today, we are entering the age of digital psychopolitics. It means passing from passive surveillance to active steering. As such, it is precipitating a further crisis of freedom: now, free will itself is at stake. Big Data is a highly efficient psychopolitical instrument that makes it possible to achieve comprehensive knowledge of the dynamics of social communication. This knowledge is knowledge for the sake of domination and control (*Herrschaftswissen*): it facilitates intervention in the psyche and enables influence to take place on a pre-reflexive level.

For human beings to be able to act freely, the future must be open. However, Big Data is making it possible to predict human behaviour. This

means that the future is becoming calculable and controllable. Digital psychopolitics transforms the negativity of freely made decisions into the *positivity of factual states* (*Sachverhalte*). Indeed, *persons* are being positivized into *things*, which can be quantified, measured and steered. Needless to say, no *thing* can be free. But at the same time, things are *more transparent* than persons. Big Data has announced the end of the *person* who possesses free will.

Every dispositive – every technology or technique of domination – brings forth characteristic devotional objects that are employed in order to subjugate. Such objects *materialize* and stabilize dominion. *Devotion* and related words mean ‘submission’, or ‘obedience’. Smartphones represent *digital* devotion – indeed, they are the *devotional objects of the Digital*, period. As a subjectivation-apparatus, the smartphone works like a rosary – which, because of its ready availability, represents a handheld device too. Both the smartphone and the rosary serve the purpose of self-monitoring and control. Power operates more effectively when it delegates surveillance to discrete individuals. *Like* is the digital *Amen*. When we click *Like*, we are bowing down to the order of domination. The smartphone is not just an effective surveillance apparatus; it is also a mobile confessional. Facebook is the church – the global synagogue (literally, ‘assembly’) of the Digital.

2.

Smart Power

Power commands highly different modes of appearance. Its most direct and immediate form finds expression as the negation of freedom. This enables power-holders to impose their will against the will of those subject to power – by violence, if need be. However, power is not limited to breaking down resistance and forcing obedience. It need not take the form of coercion. Power that relies on violence does not represent power of the highest order. The mere fact that another will manages to form and turn against the power-holder attests to the latter's weakness. Wherever power does not come into view at all, it exists without question. The greater power is, the *more quietly* it works. It just *happens*: it has no need to draw attention to itself.

To be sure, power can express itself as violence or repression. But it is not *based* on force. Power need not exclude, prohibit or censor. Not does it stand opposed to freedom. Indeed, power can even use freedom to its own ends. Only in its negative form does power manifest itself as a violence that says 'no' by shattering the will and annulling freedom. Today, power is assuming increasingly *permissive* forms. In its permissivity – indeed, in its *friendliness* – power is shedding its negativity and presenting itself as freedom.

Disciplinary power is still commanded by negativity. Its mode of articulation is *inhibitive*, not *permissive*. Because it is negative, it does not describe the neoliberal regime – which beams forth in positivity. The neoliberal regime's technology of power takes on subtle, supple and smart

forms; thereby, it escapes all visibility. Now, the subjugated subject is not even aware of its own subjugation. The whole context of domination (*Herrschaftszusammenhang*) remains entirely hidden. Consequently, the subject thinks itself free.

Inasmuch as it expends a great deal of energy to force people into the straightjacket of commandments and prohibitions, disciplinary power proves inefficient. A significantly more efficient technology of power makes sure that people subordinate themselves to power relations *on their own*. Such a dynamic seeks to activate, motivate and optimize – not to inhibit or repress. It proves so effective because it does not operate by means of forbidding and depriving, but by pleasing and fulfilling. Instead of making people *compliant*, it seeks to make them *dependent*.

Power that is smart and friendly does not operate frontally – i.e., against the will of those who are subject to it. Instead, it guides their will to its own benefit. It says ‘yes’ more often than ‘no’; it operates seductively, not repressively. It seeks to call forth positive emotions and exploit them. It *leads astray* instead of erecting obstacles. Instead of standing opposed to the subject, smart and friendly power meets the subject halfway.

Smart power cosies up to the psyche rather than disciplining it through coercion or prohibitions. It does not impose silence. Rather, it is constantly calling on us to confide, share and participate: to communicate our opinions, needs, wishes and preferences – to tell all about our lives. *Friendly* power proves *more powerful*, as it were, than purely repressive power. It manages not to be seen at all. Today’s crisis of freedom stems from the fact that the operative technology of power does not negate or repress freedom so much as exploit it. Free choice (*Wahl*) is eliminated to make way for a free selection (*Auswahl*) from among the items on offer.

Smart power with a liberal, friendly appearance – power that stimulates and seduces – is more compelling than power that imposes, threatens and decrees. Its signal and seal is the *Like* button. Now, people subjugate themselves to domination by consuming and communicating – and they click *Like* all the while. Neoliberalism is the *capitalism of ‘Like’*. It is fundamentally different from nineteenth-century capitalism, which operated by means of disciplinary constraints and prohibitions.

Smart power reads and appraises our conscious and unconscious thoughts. It places its stock in voluntary self-organization and self-optimization. As such, it has no need to overcome resistance. Mastery of

this sort requires no great expenditure of energy or violence. It simply *happens*. The capitalism of *Like* should come with a warning label: *Protect me from what I want*.

3.

The Mole and the Snake

Disciplinary society consists of settings and institutions of confinement. The family, schools, prisons, barracks, hospitals and factories all represent disciplinary spaces that confine. The disciplinary subject changes from one milieu of confinement to the next. In so doing, it moves within a *closed system*. The inhabitants of milieus of confinement can be ordered in space and time. The animal of disciplinary society is the *mole*.

In his 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', Deleuze diagnoses a general crisis affecting all milieus of confinement.[1] Their closedness and rigidity pose a problem: they are no longer suited to post-industrial, immaterial and networked forms of production. The latter push for more openness by breaking borders down. But the mole cannot bear such openness. Accordingly, the snake takes the mole's place. The snake is the animal of neoliberal control society, to which disciplinary society has yielded. In contrast to the mole, the snake does not move in closed spaces. Rather, *it makes space by means of its own movement*. The mole is a *labourer*. In contrast, the snake is an *entrepreneur*. The snake is the animal of the neoliberal regime.

The mole moves through predetermined spaces; as such, it subordinates itself to spatial restrictions. The mole is a subjugated subject. But the snake is a *project* inasmuch as it creates space through the course it steers. The passage from the mole to the snake – from subject to project – does not amount to setting out for an entirely new way of life; instead, it represents a

mutation, indeed an intensification, of capitalism, which remains one and the same. The mole's restricted movements impose limits on productivity. Even when it labours in disciplined fashion, it cannot exceed a certain level of productivity. The snake eliminates such limitations through new forms of movement. Accordingly, the capitalist system is switching from the mole-model to the snake-model in order to generate more productivity.

According to Deleuze, the disciplinary regime organizes itself as a 'body'. It is a biopolitical regime. The neoliberal regime, in contrast, seems like a 'soul'.[2] As such, *psychopolitics* is its form of government: it is 'constantly introducing an inexorable rivalry presented as healthy competition … wonderful motivation'.[3] Motivation, projects, competition, optimization and initiative represent features of the psychopolitical technology of domination that constitutes the neoliberal regime. Above all, the snake embodies the guilt and debts (*die Schuld*, *die Schulden*) that the neoliberal regime employs as instruments of domination.

4.

Biopolitics

Since the seventeenth century, Foucault claims, power has ceased to manifest itself as the godlike sovereign's capacity to deal death and instead taken the form of discipline. The power of sovereignty is the might of the sword. It threatens with death and exploits the 'privilege to seize hold of life in order to suppress it'.[1] In contrast, disciplinary power is not a power to deal death, but a power over life: its function is no longer to kill but to 'invest life through and through'.[2] Hereby, the 'old power of death' yields to the careful 'administration of bodies' and 'the calculated management of life'.[3]

The transition from the power of sovereignty to disciplinary power followed from changes in forms of production, specifically the shift from agrarian to industrial production. As industrialization proceeded, it became necessary to discipline the body and fit it to machinic production. Instead of torturing the body, disciplinary power yokes it into a system of norms. Calculated coercion pervades each and every limb and comes to be inscribed even in the automatism of habits. The body is calibrated to be a production-unit. A 'concerted orthopaedy'[4] fashions 'shapeless dough' into a 'machine'. Disciplines are 'methods which [make] possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which [assure] the constant subjection of its forces and [impose] upon them a relation of docility-utility'.[5]

Disciplinary power is normative power. It subjects the subject to a set of rules – norms, commandments and prohibitions – and eliminates deviations and anomalies. Such *negativity of training and drills* (*Abrichtung*) is constitutive of disciplinary power. On this point, it approaches the power of sovereignty, which has its basis in the negativity of *levying and conscription* (*Abschöpfung*). Both sovereign power and disciplinary power pursue allo-exploitation. They bring forth the obedience-subject.

Disciplinary technology also reaches beyond the physical realm, into the mental sphere. After all, *industry* means 'hard work'. 'Industrial school' was another term for 'reform school'. Bentham observed that his panopticon assures inmates' moral improvement too. That said, disciplinary power does not focus on the psyche. The *orthopaedic* technology of disciplinary power is too crude to penetrate into the deeper layers of the soul – with its hidden wishes, needs and desires – and take it over. Bentham's Big Brother only observes inmates from the outside. His panopticon is bound to the *optical medium*. It has *no access to inner thoughts or needs*.

Disciplinary power discovered 'population' as a productive and reproductive mass to be administrated carefully. Biopolitics is devoted to this task. Reproductive cycles, birth and death rates, levels of general health, and life expectancy provide the objects of regulation. Foucault explicitly discusses the '*biopolitics of the population*'.[6] Biopolitics is the governmental technology of disciplinary power. However, this approach proves altogether unsuited to the neoliberal regime, which exploits the psyche above all. Biopolitics, which makes use of population statistics, has no access to the psychic realm. It can deliver no material for drawing up a *psychogram* of the population. Demography is not the same thing as psychography. It cannot tap into or disclose the psyche. On this score, statistics and Big Data lie worlds apart. Big Data provides the means for establishing not just an individual but a *collective psychogram* – perhaps even the *psychogram of the unconscious itself*. As such, it may yet shine a light into the depths of the psyche and exploit the unconscious entirely.

5.

Foucault's Dilemma

After *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault recognized that disciplinary society did not reflect the times in every respect. In the late 1970s, he devoted his attention to neoliberal forms of government. However, the problem with his analyses is that he stuck to the concepts of population and biopolitics: 'It seems to me that … only when … we know what this governmental regime called liberalism was, will we be able to grasp what biopolitics is.'[1] Yet, in the course of this same series of lectures, he mentions neither biopolitics nor population again. At this juncture, Foucault evidently did not appreciate that biopolitics and population – which represent genuine categories of disciplinary society – are unsuited to describing the neoliberal regime. Consequently, he failed to do what the circumstances actually called for: to make the turn to *psychopolitics*.[2]

The 1978–9 lectures do not undertake the analysis of neoliberal biopolitics. Even though he did not recognize the real problem, Foucault offered self-critical remarks: 'I would like to assure you that, in spite of everything, I really did intend to talk about biopolitics, and then, things being what they are, I have ended up talking at length, and maybe for too long, about neoliberalism.'[3]

In the introduction to *Homo Sacer*, Giorgio Agamben speculates that 'Foucault's death kept him from showing how he would have developed the concept and study of biopolitics.'[4] But counter to such guesswork, if

Foucault's early death kept him from anything, it deprived him of the chance to reevaluate his idea of biopolitics – and abandon it in order to investigate neoliberal psychopolitics. Agamben's analysis of domination also fails to approach the technologies of power in the neoliberal regime in meaningful fashion. The *homines sacri* of today have not been shut out of the system – they have been *shut into the system*.

Foucault explicitly ties biopolitics to capitalism's disciplinary form, which socializes the body in its productive capacity: 'For capitalist society, it [is] biopolitics, the biological, the somatic, the corporal, that [matters] more than anything else.'[5] In other words, biopolitics fundamentally concerns the biological and the physical. All in all, it constitutes a *politics of the body* in the fullest sense.

But neoliberalism, a further development – indeed, a mutated form – of capitalism, is not primarily concerned with 'the biological, the somatic, the corporal'. It has discovered the psyche as a productive force. This *psychic turn* – that is, the *turn to psychopolitics* – also connects with the mode of operation of contemporary capitalism. Now, immaterial and non-physical forms of production are what determine the course of capitalism. What gets produced are not material objects, but immaterial ones – for instance, information and programs. The body no longer represents a central force of production, as it formerly did in biopolitical, disciplinary society. Now, productivity is not to be enhanced by *overcoming* physical resistance so much as by *optimizing* psychic or mental processes. Physical discipline has given way to mental optimization. And neuro-enhancement differs from the disciplinary techniques of psychiatry fundamentally.

Today, the body is being released from the immediate process of production and turning into the object of optimization, whether along aesthetic lines or in terms of health technology. Accordingly, orthopaedic intervention is yielding to *aesthetic* intervention. Foucault's 'docile body' has no place in this production process. Cosmetic surgery and fitness studios are taking the place of disciplinary orthopaedics. That said, physical optimization means more than *aesthetic* practice alone: sexiness and fitness represent new economic resources to be increased, marketed and exploited.

Bernard Stiegler has rightly observed that Foucault's concept of biopower is not suited to the times: 'Foucault's biopower, which he himself describes (and so powerfully) historically and geographically by localizing

it in Europe, is no longer the force behind *our* age.'[6] According to Stiegler, biopower has been replaced by '*psychotechnological* psychopower'.[7] Above all, he has in mind the 'programming industry', which is 'telecratic': by reducing (*entmündigen*) us to impulsive (*triebgesteuert*) creatures of consumption, it induces mass regression. Such psychotechnics contrasts with the technology of writing and reading. For Stiegler, the medium of literacy means enlightenment. Accordingly, he invokes Kant: 'Kant's thought of maturity as humanity's sovereignty' is based on the 'apparatus of reading and writing'.[8]

However, Stiegler's overemphasis on television is problematic. For him, it represents the psychotechnical apparatus *tout court*: 'Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, cell phones, and … many other devices … catalyze … synaptic circuitry,' yet it is 'principally … television' that governs the influx of information.[9] In fact, the opposition between literacy and television affords a superannuated scheme of cultural critique, which fails to do justice to the digital revolution. Strangely, Stiegler hardly examines truly digital technology such as the internet and social media – which prove fundamentally different from the mass media of the past. What is more, he barely pays attention to the panoptic structure of digital networks. As a result, he completely misses the workings of neoliberal psychopolitics, which employs digital technology on a massive scale.

In the early 1980s, Foucault turned to 'technologies of the self'. The term refers to 'intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria'.[10] Foucault developed a historically situated ethics of the self – and he did so in a context largely detached from technologies and techniques of power and domination. Consequently, it is often assumed that his ethics of the self stands in opposition to power and domination. Indeed, Foucault himself pointed out the shift he was making from technologies of power to technologies of the self: 'Perhaps I've insisted too much on the technology of domination and power. I am more and more interested in the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual

domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself, in the technology of the self.'[11]

In fact, the blind spot in Foucault's analysis is the technology of power under the neoliberal regime. Foucault did not see that *the neoliberal regime utterly claims the technology of the self for its own purposes*: perpetual self-optimization – as the exemplary neoliberal technology of the self – represents nothing so much as a highly efficient mode of domination and exploitation.[12] As an 'entrepreneur of himself',[13] the neoliberal achievement-subject engages in auto-exploitation willingly – and even passionately. The self-as-a-work-of-art amounts to a beautiful but deceptive illusion that the neoliberal regime maintains in order to exhaust its resources entirely.

Under neoliberalism, the technology of power takes on a subtle form. It does not lay hold of individuals directly. Instead, it ensures that individuals act on themselves so that power relations are interiorized – and then interpreted as freedom. Self-optimization and submission, freedom and exploitation, fall into one. Such engineering of freedom and exploitation, which occurs in order to effect self-exploitation, is what escaped Foucault.

6.
Healing as Killing

Neoliberal psychopolitics is always coming up with more refined forms of exploitation. Countless self-management workshops, motivational retreats and seminars on personality or mental training promise boundless self-optimization and heightened efficiency. They are steered by neoliberal techniques of domination, which aim to capitalize not just on working time but on the person him- or herself: all the attention the individual commands and, indeed, his or her very life. Neoliberalism has discovered integral *human being* as the object of exploitation.

The neoliberal imperative of self-optimization serves only to promote perfect functioning within the system. Inhibitions, points of weakness and mistakes are to be therapeutically eliminated in order to enhance efficiency and performance. In turn, everything is made comparable and measurable and subjected to the logic of the market. It is not concern for the good life that drives self-optimization. Rather, self-optimization follows from systemic constraints – from the logic of quantifying success on the market.

The age of sovereignty was the age of levying and conscription: the expropriation and appropriation of goods and services. The power of sovereignty expressed itself as the right to seize and dispose at will. In contrast, disciplinary society banks on production. It is the age of active and industrial added-value. That said, the time for creating new value which is real is over and done. Indeed, under the financial capitalism of our day, value is being destroyed at the root – eradicated. The neoliberal regime is in

the course of inaugurating the age of exhaustion. Today, the psyche itself is being exploited. Accordingly, psychic maladies such as depression and burnout define our times.

In contemporary American self-help literature, the magic word is *healing*. The term refers to self-optimization that is supposed to *therapeutically eliminate* any and all functional weakness or mental obstacle in the name of efficiency and performance. Yet perpetual self-optimization, which coincides point-for-point with the optimization of the system, is proving destructive. It is leading to *mental collapse*. Self-optimization, it turns out, amounts to total self-exploitation.

The neoliberal ideology of self-optimization displays religious – indeed, fanatical – traits. It entails a new form of subjectivation. Endlessly working at self-improvement resembles the self-examination and self-monitoring of Protestantism, which represents a technology of subjectivation and domination in its own right. Now, instead of searching out sins, one hunts down negative thoughts. The ego grapples with itself as an enemy. Today, even fundamentalist preachers act like managers and motivational trainers, proclaiming the new Gospel of limitless achievement and optimization.

It is impossible to subordinate human personhood to the dictates of positivity entirely. Without negativity, life degrades into 'something dead'.[1] Indeed, negativity is what keeps life alive. Pain is constitutive for *experience* (*Erfahrung*). Life that consists wholly of positive emotions and the sensation of 'flow'[2] is not human at all. The human soul owes its defining tautness and depth precisely to negativity:

> That tension of the soul in unhappiness which cultivates its strength … its inventiveness and courage in enduring, persevering, interpreting, and exploiting suffering, and whatever has been granted to it of profundity, secret, mask, spirit, cunning, greatness – was it not granted through suffering, through the discipline of great suffering?[3]

The imperative of boundless optimization even manages to exploit pain. Thus, the famous motivational speaker Tony Robbins has written:

> When you set a goal, you've committed to CANI (Constant, Never-Ending Improvement)! You've acknowledged the need that all

> human beings have for constant, never-ending improvement. There is a power in the pressure of dissatisfaction, in the tension of temporary discomfort. This is the kind of pain you *want* in your life.[4]

Now, the only pain that is tolerated is pain that can be exploited for the purposes of optimization.

But the violence of positivity is just as destructive as the violence of negativity.[5] Neoliberal psychopolitics, with the consciousness industry it promotes, is destroying the human soul, which is anything but a machine of positivity (*Positivmaschine*). The neoliberal subject is running aground on the imperative of self-optimization, that is, on the compulsion always to achieve more and more. Healing, it turns out, means killing.

7.

Shock

Naomi Klein's *Shock Doctrine*, which smacks of conspiracy, calls the first of its two main characters 'Doctor Shock'. This is the name given to the Montreal psychiatrist Dr Ewen Cameron, who believed that administering electric shocks could destroy bad elements within the brain, erase them and enable a new personality to be constructed starting from a 'clean slate'. By means of electroshock, Cameron plunged his patients into a state of chaos that was supposed to provide the basis for their rebirth as healthy, model citizens. In other words, he understood the acts of destruction he performed as a kind of creation. The psyche was subjected to a violent 'de-branding' and 're-branding'. It was to be newly formatted and rewritten, as it were.

Cameron set up a panopticon with isolation chambers, where he conducted human experiments of the utmost cruelty. The rooms were like torture chambers. First, over the course of a month, patients were administered powerful electroshocks. This served to expunge their memories. In the process, they were also given mind-altering drugs. Their hands and arms were stuck in cardboard tubes in order to keep them from touching their bodies, i.e. to prevent them from having any encounter with their own self-image. Moreover, Cameron deprived his patients of sensory impressions by inducing extended sleep by pharmaceutical means: they were brought out of this state only to eat and perform bodily functions. Such conditions could last for up to thirty days. Staff were instructed to

prohibit patients from speaking. Cameron's hospital was a panopticon far crueller than Bentham's.

The CIA funded Cameron's research, which took place at the height of the Cold War. A fervent anticommunist, Cameron thought his experiments were part of the battle. He likened his patients to communist prisoners of war undergoing interrogation.[1] Indeed, his practices resembled interrogation techniques; they occurred in conjunction with brainwashing and the ideological struggles of the Cold War. The Manichaean opposition between Good and Evil lay at their foundation: Evil would be wiped away, eradicated, and replaced by Good. Likewise, the *negativity* of immunological defence against the Other, or the Enemy, defined Cameron's practices. As Doctor Shock, Cameron represents a phenomenon of the *Immunological Age*. The immunological intervention of shock therapy takes aim at the Other, the Alien, the Enemy. It is meant to disarm the adversary, so his soul may be inscribed with a different ideology, another narrative.

Klein's other main character – the second Doctor Shock – is Milton Friedman, the theologian of the neoliberal market. Klein draws parallels between the two men. For Friedman, the state of shock that follows a catastrophe offers the opportunity – indeed, the ideal moment – for society to be reshaped. Accordingly, the neoliberal regime should operate by means of shock, which wipes the psyche clean and empties it out. When it has been rendered defenceless, the mind readily accepts radical reprogramming. When people are still paralyzed and traumatized by disaster, they can become the objects of neoliberal conditioning:

> Friedman's mission, like Cameron's, rested on a dream of reaching back to a state of 'natural' health, when all was in balance, before human interferences created distorting patterns. Where Cameron dreamed of returning the human mind to that pristine state, Friedman dreamed of depatterning societies, of returning them to a state of pure capitalism, cleansed of all interruptions – government regulations, trade barriers and entrenched interests. Also like Cameron, Friedman believed that when the economy is highly distorted, the only way to reach that prelapsarian state was to deliberately inflict painful shocks: only 'bitter medicine' could clear those distortions and bad patterns out of the way.[2]

But Klein’s theory of shock blinds her to the actual workings of neoliberal psychopolitics. Shock therapy is a genuinely disciplinary technique. Violent psychiatric interventions of this kind are employed in disciplinary society alone: they number among the biopolitical measures of coercion. As psycho-disciplines, they are orthopaedic in nature. In contrast, the neoliberal technology of power does not exercise disciplinary coercion. Electroshock’s mode of operation differs fundamentally from that of neoliberal psychopolitics. Electroshock owes its efficacy to paralyzing and annihilating the contents of the psyche. Its essential trait is *negativity*. In contrast, neoliberal psychopolitics is dominated by *positivity*. Instead of working with negative threats, it works with *positive stimuli*. Instead of administering ‘bitter medicine’, it enlists *Liking*. It flatters the psyche instead of shaking it and paralyzing it with shocks. Neoliberal psychopolitics seduces the soul; it preempts it in lieu of opposing it. It carefully protocols desires, needs and wishes instead of ‘depatterning’ them. By means of calculated prognoses, it anticipates actions – and acts ahead of them instead of cancelling them out. Neoliberal psychopolitics is SmartPolitics: it seeks to please and fulfil, not to repress.

8.

Friendly Big Brother

‘Newspeak’ is the name for the ideal language in George Orwell’s surveillance state. It is meant to supplant ‘oldspeak’ entirely. Newspeak has only one goal: to restrict room for thinking freely. Every year, words decrease in number, and the space for conscious thought diminishes. Syme, a friend of *1984*’s hero Winston, raves about the beauty of destroying words. ‘Thoughtcrimes’, he enthuses, will be made impossible when the words necessary for them are struck from the lexicon. In the process, the notion of freedom will be abolished too. On this score, Orwell’s surveillance state differs fundamentally from the world of the digital panopticon – which uses freedom to excess. Today’s society of information is not characterized by destroying words, but by multiplying them without end.

The spirit of the Cold War and the negativity of enmity dominate Orwell’s novel. The country it describes is in a state of permanent war. Julia, Winston’s love interest, speculates that the bombs raining down on London every day have been launched by Big Brother and the Party in order to maintain fear and terror in the populace. The ‘Enemy of the People’ is called Emmanuel Goldstein. He commands a network of underground conspirators seeking to overthrow the government. Big Brother is at ideological war with Goldstein. ‘Two Minutes Hate’, broadcast daily on the ‘telescreen’, takes aim at Goldstein. In the ‘Ministry of Truth’ – in fact, a Ministry of Lies – the past is revised and fitted to ideology.

Orwell's surveillance state employs the psychotechnical methods of brainwashing: electroshock, sleep deprivation, solitary confinement, drugs and physical torture. The 'Ministry of Plenty' (newspeak: 'Miniplenty') sees to it that consumer goods are always lacking, so that an artificial state of need may be maintained.

Orwell's surveillance state, with its telescreens and torture chambers, is fundamentally different from today's digital panopticon, with its internet, smartphones and Google Glass. In the digital panopticon, the illusion of limitless freedom and communication predominates. Here there is no torture – just tweets and posts. Nor is there a mysterious 'Ministry of Truth'. Transparency and information have taken the place of truth. The new conception of power does not involve controlling the past, but steering the future psychopolitically.

The neoliberal technology of power does not prohibit, protect or repress; instead, it prospects, permits and projects. Consumption is not held in check, but maximized. No production of scarcity occurs; instead, surplus is generated – indeed, a superabundance of positivity. Everyone is encouraged to communicate and consume. The principle of negativity, which still defined Orwell's state, has yielded to the principle of positivity. Needs are not repressed, but stimulated. Confession obtained by force has been replaced by voluntary disclosure. Smartphones have been substituted for torture chambers. Big Brother now wears a *friendly* face. His *friendliness* is what makes surveillance so efficient.

Bentham's Big Brother was invisible, but he was everywhere in prisoners' minds. Inmates interiorized him. In contrast, the inhabitants of today's digital panopticon never really feel that they are being watched or threatened. Consequently, 'surveillance state' is an imprecise name for describing the digital panopticon. Here, everyone feels free. However, precisely this *feeling of freedom* – which is nowhere to be found in Orwell's state – is now the problem.

The digital panopticon thrives on its occupants' voluntary self-exposure. Self-exploitation and self-illumination follow the same logic. In either case, freedom is exploited. The digital panopticon lacks a Big Brother wresting information from us against our will. Instead, we lay ourselves bare voluntarily.

The advertisement that Apple aired during the 1984 Superbowl has become the stuff of legend. In it the company presented itself as a force of

liberation, which would counter the Orwellian surveillance state. In lock-step, listless workers – evidently without a will of their own – march into a vast hall and listen to Big Brother's fanatical declamations on the telescreen. Then the ad shows a woman rushing into the assembly hall, the Thought Police in hot pursuit. Bearing a sledgehammer before her heaving breast, she dashes forward. Full of resolve, she runs straight up to Big Brother and throws the sledgehammer at the telescreen with all the force she can muster; it explodes in a dazzling burst of light. The assembled workers promptly awaken from their torpor. A voice declares: 'On January 24th, Apple Computer will introduce Macintosh. And you'll see why 1984 won't be like *1984*.' But despite Apple's message, 1984 did not signal the end of the surveillance state so much as the inception of a new kind of control society – one whose operations surpass the Orwellian state by leaps and bounds. Now, communication and control have become one, without remainder. Now, everyone is his or her own panopticon.

9.

Emotional Capitalism

Today, talk of feeling and emotion has grown inflationary. Many academic disciplines are researching emotion. All of a sudden, the human being no longer counts as an *animal rationale*; instead, man is a creature of sentiment. That said, hardly anyone bothers to ask where this sudden interest in emotions came from. Scientific emotion-researchers are clearly not reflecting much on their own activities. Thus, they have failed to remark that the emotional 'boom' stems from an economic process, above all. Worse still, utter conceptual confusion prevails. 'Emotion', 'feeling' and 'affect' seem interchangeable for many researchers.

Yet feeling and emotion are not identical. We speak, for instance, of a feeling for language, athletics or other people – *Sprachgefühl, Ballgefühl, Mitgefühl* (respectively: linguistic aptitude, a knack for sports and compassion). One may 'have a feel for language' or 'feel for others', but no one has an 'emotion for language' or experiences 'com-emotion'. There is no such thing as 'language-affect' or 'com-affect' either. Mourning is a feeling too. But it sounds strange to speak of an 'affect of mourning' or an 'emotion of mourning'. Affect and emotion refer to strictly subjective matters, whereas feeling refers to something objective.

Feeling can be recounted. It has narrative length, or breadth. Neither affect nor emotion admits an *account*. The crisis of feelings that can be observed in contemporary theatre also represents a crisis of *giving-account* (*Erzählung*). Today, the narrative theatre of feelings is yielding to a

clamorous *theatre of affects*. Because narrative is lacking, an affective mass gets piled onto the stage. But, in contrast to feeling, affect does not open up *space*. Instead, it steers a linear *path* in order to discharge, to unload itself. The digital medium is an affect-medium too. Digital communication fosters the *immediate* release of affect: catharsis (*Affektabfuhr*). Simply on the basis of its temporality, digital communication conveys affect more than it transmits feeling. Shitstorms are streams of affect. They represent exemplary phenomena of digital communication.

Feelings are *constative*. For instance, we say: 'I have a feeling *that*.' In contrast, it is impossible to say, 'I have an affect (or an emotion) *that*.' Emotions are not *constative*, but *performative*. They refer to actions and deeds. Furthermore, they are intentional and goal-oriented. Feelings, on the other hand, do not necessarily display an intentional structure. Often, the feeling of anxiety has no concrete object. That is what makes anxiety different from fear, which has an intentional structure. Nor is a 'feel' – that is, a sense – for language intentional. Its non-intentionality is what distinguishes it from linguistic *expression*, which, because it *ex-presses*, is *e-motive*. A feeling of cosmic oneness – an oceanic sense of the world (*ein kosmisches Mitgefühl*, *ein ozeanisches Welt-Gefühl*) – that does not focus on anything or anyone in particular is also possible. Neither emotions nor affects achieve the dimensions that characterize feelings. Emotions and affects are expressions of subjectivity.

Feelings also have a different temporality than emotions. They admit *duration*. Emotions prove significantly more fleeting and short-lived than feelings. Likewise, affect is often limited to a single moment. In contrast to feelings, emotions do not represent a *state*. The emotion does not *stand*. There is no *emotion of rest*. A *feeling of calm* is easy to conceive. In contrast, the expression 'emotional state' has a paradoxical ring. Emotions are dynamic, situative and performative. Emotional capitalism exploits precisely these qualities. Feelings, in contrast, cannot be readily exploited inasmuch as they have no performativity. Finally, affects are not performative so much as eruptive; they lack *performative directionality*.

Atmosphere – or *mood* (*Stimmung*) – differs from both feeling and emotion. It possesses even more objectivity than feeling. Objectively, a space or room can harbour any given atmosphere. An atmosphere or mood expresses a *way-it-is*. In contrast, emotions derive from deviations from the way-it-is. For instance, a place may diffuse a friendly mood. This

atmosphere is something wholly objective. But there is no such thing as a friendly emotion or a friendly affect. Atmosphere/mood is neither intentional nor performative. It is the element *where one happens to find oneself* (*etwas, worin man sich befindet*). It represents a state of being or state of mind (*Befindlichkeit*). As such, atmosphere is *static* and *constellative* – whereas emotion is *dynamic* and *performative*. *Where* distinguishes a state, a disposition; in contrast *whither* – a direction – defines emotion. Feeling, in turn, is a matter of *wherefore*: 'why'.

Eva Illouz's *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism* offers no answer to the question of why it is that feelings experience a boom under conditions of capitalism, in particular. What is more, the book equates feelings and emotions without drawing any conceptual distinction at all. Nor is it very useful to locate the question of feelings under capitalism at its inaugural stages: 'Weber's Protestant ethic contains at its core a thesis about the role of emotions in economic action, for it is the anxiety provoked by an inscrutable divinity which is at the heart of the capitalist entrepreneur's frantic activity.'[1] It is mistaken to understand anxiety in terms of emotion. Anxiety is a feeling. Its corresponding temporality proves incompatible with affect. Affect is not a constant state. As such, it lacks the constancy that defines feeling. It is the constant *feeling* of anxiety that would entail frantic entrepreneurial activity. But what Weber analyses is the ascetic capitalism of accumulation, which obeys rational logic more than it follows emotional logic. Accordingly, capitalism of this sort does not feed into consumer capitalism, which derives its profits from emotions. Moreover, consumer capitalism operates through the selling and consumption of meanings and emotions. It is not use value but emotive or cultic value that plays a constitutive role in the economy of consumption. By the same token, Illouz fails to account for the fact that emotion comes to possess value for capitalism only when a switch to immaterial production occurs. Emotions have become a means of production only in our own times.

Illouz also contends that the core of Durkheimian sociology, solidarity, represents a 'bundle of emotions' binding social actors to the central symbols of the society they inhabit. Summing up her argument, she declares:

> Unbeknown to them, canonical sociological accounts of modernity contain, if not a full-fledged theory of emotions, at least numerous references to them: anxiety, love, competitiveness, indifference, guilt are all present in most historical and sociological accounts of the ruptures which have led to the modern era.[2]

All of these references to various sociological theories of emotion do nothing at all to explain the boom of emotion *today*. This corresponds to Illouz's neglect of conceptual distinctions between feeling, emotion and affect. After all, 'indifference' and 'guilt' are neither affects nor emotions. It is only meaningful to speak of the *feeling* of guilt.

Clearly, Illouz has failed to notice that the boom of emotion in our times ultimately derives from neoliberalism. The neoliberal regime deploys emotions as resources in order to bring about heightened productivity and achievement. Starting at a certain level of production, *rationality* – which is the medium of disciplinary society – hits a limit. Henceforth, it is experienced as a constraint, an inhibition. Suddenly, it seems rigid and inflexible. At this point, *emotionality* takes its place, which is attended by the feeling of liberty – the free unfolding of personality. After all, being free means giving free rein to emotions. Emotional capitalism banks on freedom. It hails emotion as the expression of unbridled subjectivity. Neoliberal technologies of power exploit this same subjectivity mercilessly.

Rationality is defined by objectivity, generality and steadiness. As such, it stands opposed to emotionality, which is subjective, situative and volatile. Emotions arise, above all, when circumstances change – and perception shifts. Rationality entails duration, consistency and regularity. It prefers stable conditions. The neoliberal economy, increasingly dismantling continuity and progressively integrating instability in order to enhance productivity, is pushing the emotionalization of the productive process forward. Accelerated communication also promotes its emotionalization. Rationality is *slower* than emotionality; it *has no speed*, as it were. Thus, the pressure of acceleration now is leading to a *dictatorship of emotion*.

Consumer capitalism enlists emotion in order to generate more desires and needs. *Emotional Design* moulds emotions and shapes emotional patterns for the sake of maximizing consumption. All in all, today we do not consume things so much as emotions. The former cannot be consumed without end – but the latter can. Emotions assume dimensions beyond the

scope of use value. In so doing, they open up a field of consumption that is new and knows no limit.

In disciplinary society, where one's task is to *function*, emotions represent disturbances. Accordingly, every effort is made to weed them out. Disciplinary society's 'concerted orthopaedy' seeks to make a shapeless mass of dough into an unfeeling machine. Machines function best when all emotions and feelings have been switched off.

The boom in emotion today stems, not least of all, from a new, immaterial mode of production in which communicative interaction plays an ever-greater role. It calls not just for cognitive competence, but also for emotional competence. In this context, the integral person is *installed* in the very process of production. Daimler-Chrysler has publicly declared that since employees' 'behaviour and their social and emotional skills play an increasing role in the evaluation of their work … this will … be assessed … on the basis of objectives achieved and the quality of outcomes.'[3] Now, sociality, communication and even individual conduct are being exploited. Emotions provide 'raw material' with which to optimize corporate communication. As Hewlett-Packard puts it: 'HP is a firm where one can breathe a spirit of communication, a strong spirit of interrelations, where people can communicate, where you go towards others. It is an affective relationship.'[4]

A paradigm shift is taking place at the administrative level of companies. Emotions are being granted more and more significance. Rational management techniques are being replaced by *emotional management*. Managers today are leaving the principle of rational action behind. Increasingly, they resemble *motivation coaches*. Motivation connects with emotion. Positive emotions provide the ferment that makes *motivation* grow.

Emotions are performative in so far as they call forth certain actions. As *inclinations*, they represent the energetic – the sensory, or even sensuous – basis for action. Emotions are steered by the limbic system, which is also where the drives are seated. They form the pre-reflexive, half-conscious, physico-instinctual level of action that escapes full awareness. Neoliberal psychopolitics seizes on emotion *in order to influence actions on this pre-reflexive level*. By way of emotion, it manages to cut and operate deep

inside. As such, emotion affords a highly efficient medium for psychopolitically steering the integral person, the person as a whole.

10.
Gamification

In order to heighten productivity, emotional capitalism also enlists playing and games – which should, in fact, be the *Other of Work*, its opposite. Emotional capitalism is gamifying the life- and working world. Playing games lends an emotional, indeed a dramatic, charge to working – which in turn generates more motivation. Because games rapidly deliver a sense of success and reward, the result is higher performance and a greater yield. A person playing a game, being emotionally invested, is much more engaged than a worker who acts rationally or is simply *functioning*.

Games exhibit a specific temporality marked by immediate experiences of success and reward. But what matures over time cannot be gamified. Whatever is long, anything that lasts a long time, proves incompatible with the game's temporality. Hunting, for instance, matches the mode of the game, whereas farming, which depends on slow processes of ripening and quiet growth, cannot be gamified at all. Life cannot be turned into hunting alone.

The gamification of work exploits *homo ludens*. The player subjugates him- or herself to the order of domination *in the very act of playing*. Today, the gamification logic of 'Likes', 'Friends' and 'Followers' means that social communication is also being plugged into and subordinated to a game mode. The corollary of the gamification of communication is its commercialization. That said, this process is destroying *human* communication.

‘A corpse is running society – the corpse of labour’ (*Ein Leichnam beherrscht die Gesellschaft – der Leichnam der Arbeit*). So begins the *Manifesto against Labour*, written by the *Krisis-Group*, which is based around Robert Kurz.[1] Following the microelectronic revolution, the argument goes, the production of wealth has grown increasingly detached from human labour. Yet at the same time, society has never been so thoroughly committed to work as it is in our post-Fordist age – an epoch that, in actual fact, is only making labour more and more superfluous. The manifesto points out that the political Left, in particular, has exalted labour. Not only has it declared work the essence of human *being*; more still, it has mystified labour and pronounced it the opposite principle to capital. The Left does not view work itself as a scandal – only its exploitation. For this reason, the manifesto concludes, the programme of all workers’ parties has always been simply the liberation of labour, instead of liberation *from* labour. Labour and Capital, then, represent two sides of the same coin.

Yet despite highly vigorous forces of production, we have not witnessed the advent of the ‘realm of freedom’ (*Reich der Freiheit*) where ‘labour determined by necessity and external expediency ends’.[2] Ultimately, Marx himself adhered to the *primacy of labour*: the ‘increase of free time’, he contends, ‘reacts back upon the power of labour as itself the greatest productive power’.[3] But with that, the realm of necessity comes to colonize the realm of freedom. ‘Idle time’ as ‘time for higher activity’ transforms its possessor ‘into a different subject’ with greater productive force than one who merely toils. As ‘time for the full development of the individual’, free time contributes to the ‘production of *fixed capital*’.[4] In fact, this means that knowledge gets capitalized too. In modern parlance, more leisure time means increased *human capital*: idleness that might otherwise be devoted to activities free of purpose and constraint are integrated into the operations of Capital. Even though Marx speaks of ‘*capital fixe* being man himself’, human beings, endowed with ‘general intellect’, are now transforming themselves into Capital. In contrast, true freedom would be possible only if life were entirely freed from Capital – which represents a new form of transcendence. The transcendence of Capital stands in the way of *life as immanence*.

Contrary to Marx’s assumptions, the dialectic between forces of production and relations of production is not leading to freedom. More than

anything else, it is entangling us in exploitation along new lines. We would have to think with Marx beyond Marx in order to make freedom – indeed, time that is free – our own. It could only come from the Other of Work: a wholly other force that no longer serves production or admits transformation into any kind of workforce at all. In other words, freedom could only come from a *mode of living* (*Lebensform*) that is no longer a *mode of production* – indeed, from *something altogether unproductive*. The course our future takes will depend on whether we prove able, beyond the world of production, to *make use of the useless*.

The human being is a creature of luxury. In the original and authentic sense, luxury is not a practice of consumption. Rather, it means a mode of living that is free of necessity. Freedom is based on deviation: *luxuriance*, getting away from necessity (*Notwendigkeit*). Luxury transcends the intention of averting need (*die Not zu wenden*). But today, consumption is co-opting even luxury. Excessive consumption amounts to unfreedom: compulsion corresponding to the unfreedom of labour. Luxury as freedom – like play that is truly free – can be thought only beyond the world of work and consumption. Viewed in this light, it stands close to asceticism.

True happiness comes from what runs riot, lets go, is exuberant and loses meaning – the excessive and superfluous. That is, it comes from what luxuriates, what has taken leave of all necessity, work, performance and purpose. But today, even excess is being pocketed by Capital, which strips it of its emancipatory potential entirely. What is more, playing and games belong to luxury too – but as play that is not yoked to the process of labour and production. As a means of production, gamification is destroying play's potential to set free. Play should make it possible to use things in wholly different ways; it should liberate them from the theology and teleology of Capital.

Not long ago, a highly unusual incident in Greece was reported. It was all the more unusual for occurring in a country suffering so greatly under the yoke of Capital. The event possesses a singularly *emblematic* quality – so much so that it seems like a *sign from the future*. Children, it is said, found a large bundle of banknotes in the ruins of a house. They made use of them in a wholly other way: playing with them and tearing them to shreds. Perhaps these children anticipated a future we will share: *the world lies in rubble; in the ruins, we are playing too – tearing apart paper money*.

‘Profanation’ means taking things that belonged to the gods – and were therefore removed from mortal use – and returning them to human beings to do with as they will.[5] The Greek children were *profaning* money by handing it over to an entirely other use: games and play. In a single stroke, profanation transformed what is so fetishized today – money – into a common toy.

Agamben understands religion in terms of the Latin *relegere*. Accordingly, it means being attentive and alert: watching over things that are holy and taking care that they remain separate from other things. Such setting-apart is essential to religion. Profanation, then, means adopting an *attitude of conscious negligence* with regard to this same watchfulness. The children in Greece were displaying carelessness about money when they simply played with it and tore it apart. As such, profanation represents a *practice of freedom* that liberates us from transcendence – from any and every form of subjectivation. In this manner, profanation opens a *playful margin of immanence* (*Spiel-Raum der Immanenz*).

There are two forms of thinking: thinking at work and thinking at play. The conceptions advanced by Hegel and Marx are governed by the principle of work. Likewise, Heidegger’s *Being and Time* is still bound to working. In its ‘care’ or ‘anxiety’, *Dasein* does not play. Only later did Heidegger discover play, which is based on ‘releasement’ (*Gelassenheit*). In this light, he came to interpret the world itself as play. Now, he sought out the ‘open (*das Offene*) of a free space hardly surmised and heeded, in which beings come into play as such’.[6] Heidegger’s ‘time-play-space’ (*Zeit-Spiel-Raum*) gestures towards a time-space free of labour in any form. In this *realm of the event, psychology* has been completely surpassed as a mode of subjectivation.

11.

Big Data

Columbus and His Egg

Bentham likened his panopticon to ‘Columbus and his *egg*’.[1] By his account, the invention should be applied to all disciplinary milieus of incarceration because it promotes the exceptionally efficient surveillance of inmates. The panopticon represents a watershed in the social order: ‘What would you say, if by the gradual adoption and diversified application of this single principle, you should see a new scene of things spread itself over the face of civilized society?’[2]

Will Big Data also prove to be Columbus’s egg for the contemporary society of digital control – a system even more effective than Bentham’s panopticon? Will it actually manage not just to watch over human behaviour, but also to subject it to psychopolitical steering? Is another, wholly unintuited drama poised to redraw the face of civilized society itself?

If nothing else, Big Data has given rise to a highly efficient form of control. Acxiom, an American Big Data company, promises clients a ‘360-degree customer view’. Indeed, the digital panopticon has made possible a wraparound view of those who dwell within it. Bentham’s panopticon was confined to a perspectival optical system. This meant that blind spots were unavoidable – here, prisoners could indulge in secret wishes and thoughts without being observed.

Digital surveillance proves so efficient because it is *aperspectival*. It does not suffer from the perspectival limitations characterizing analogue optical systems. Digital optics enables surveillance from any and every angle. It eliminates all blind spots. In contrast to analogue and perspectival optics, it can peer into the human soul itself.

Dataism

In the pages of the *New York Times*, David Brooks has announced a data revolution. His words are as prophetic as Chris Anderson's famous article 'The End of Theory'. 'Dataism' is the name of the new faith:

> If you asked me to describe the rising philosophy of the day, I'd say it is data-ism. We now have the ability to gather huge amounts of data. This ability seems to carry with it certain cultural assumptions – that everything that can be measured should be measured; that data is a transparent and reliable lens that allows us to filter out emotionalism and ideology; that data will help us do remarkable things – like foretell the future … The data revolution is giving us wonderful ways to understand the present and the past.[3]

Dataism has taken the stage with the fervour of a *second Enlightenment*. During the *first Enlightenment*, statistics was thought to possess the capacity to liberate human knowledge from the clutches of mythology. Accordingly, euphoric celebration occurred. In light of such developments, Voltaire even voiced the wish for a new historiography, freed from past superstition. Statistics, as he put it, offers 'an object of curiosity for anyone who would like to read history as a citizen and as a philosopher'.[4] Revised by statistics, history would become truly philosophical. As Rüdiger Campe writes, 'The numbers of statistics provide the *basis* from which [Voltaire] can articulate his methodological mistrust of all histories that exist only as narratives. The stories of *ancient history* accordingly offer an example that borders on mythology for [him].'[5] Statistics and Enlightenment are one and the same for Voltaire. Statistics means setting *objective knowledge founded on, and driven by, numbers* in opposition to mythological narration.

Now, *transparency* is the buzzword of the second Enlightenment. Data are supposed to be a pellucid medium. As Brooks describes them, data afford a 'transparent and reliable lens'. The imperative of the second Enlightenment declares: everything must become data and information. The soul of the second Enlightenment is data totalitarianism, or data fetishism. Although it announces that it is taking leave of all ideology, dataism itself is an ideology. It is leading to *digital totalitarianism*. Therefore, a *third Enlightenment* is called for – in order to shine a light on how digital enlightenment has transformed into a new kind of servitude.

Big Data is supposed to be freeing knowledge from subjective arbitrariness. By this logic, intuition does not represent a higher form of knowing; instead, it represents something merely subjective – a stopgap compensating for the shortage of objective data. In complex situations, the argument goes, intuition is blind. The mistrust even extends to theory, which is suspected of being an ideology: if enough data are available, it should prove superfluous as well. The second Enlightenment is the age of purely *data-driven* knowledge. Anderson's visionary rhetoric goes: 'Out with every theory of human behavior, from linguistics to sociology. Forget taxonomy, ontology, and psychology. Who knows why people do what they do? The point is they do it, and we can track and measure it with unprecedented fidelity. With enough data, the numbers speak for themselves.'[6]

The medium of the first Enlightenment was reason. However, imagination, corporeality and desire were repressed in its name. By a fatal dialectic, the first Enlightenment switched over into barbarism. Now, in the second Enlightenment – which appeals to information, data and transparency – the same dialectic threatens to do the same. The second Enlightenment is summoning forth a new kind of violence. The *Dialectic of Enlightenment* holds that the process of illumination that set out to destroy mythology became entangled, with every stride it made, in a mythology of its own: 'False clarity is only another name for myth.'[7] Adorno would say that the 'transparency' of today is another name for myth too – that dataism likewise heralds false clarity. The dialectic of old is also making the second Enlightenment, which seeks to counter ideology, into an ideology in its own right – more still, it is leading to the *barbarism of data*.

Dataism, it turns out, is amounting to digital Dadaism. Dadaism also takes leave of meaningful contexts of every kind. It empties language itself

of sense: ‘The acts of life have no beginning or end. Everything happens in a completely idiotic way. That is why everything is alike. Simplicity is called Dada.’[8] Dataism is nihilism.[9] It gives up on any and all meaning. Data and numbers are not narrative; they are additive. Meaning, on the other hand, is based on narration. Data simply fills up the senseless void.

Now, numbers and data are not just being absolutized – they are becoming sexualized and fetishized. This amounts to nothing other than libidinal energy flowing into today’s ‘Quantified Self’. On the whole, dataism is displaying libidinous – indeed, pornographic – traits. *Dataists* mate with their data. In the meanwhile, there is even talk of ‘datasexuals’. They are ‘relentlessly digital’ and consider data ‘sexy’.[10] The *digitus* is starting to play the part of the *phallus*.

Quantified Self

Belief that life admits measurement and quantification governs the digital age as a whole. ‘Quantified Self’ honours this faith too. The body is outfitted with sensors that automatically register data. Measurements involve temperature, blood sugar levels, calorie intake and use, movement profiles and fat content. The heart rate is taken in a state of meditation: performance and efficiency still count when relaxing. Moods, dispositions and routine activities are all inventoried as well. Such self-measurement and self-monitoring is supposed to enhance mental performance. Yet the mounting pile of data this yields does nothing to answer the simple question, *Who am I?* ‘Quantified Self’ represents a Dadaist technology too; it empties the self of any and all meaning. The self gets broken down into data until no sense remains.

The motto of Quantified Self is ‘Self Knowledge through Numbers’. But no insight into the self can result from data and numbers alone, no matter how exhaustive they are. Numbers do not *recount* anything about the self. Counting is not recounting. A sense of self derives from giving an *account*. It is not counting, but recounting that leads to self-discovery or self-knowledge.

In antiquity, the care of the self was also tied to practices of self-observation. *Publicatio sui* (Tertullian) represented a significant component of paying due attention in this manner:

> Writing was also important in the culture of taking care of oneself. One of the main features of taking care involved taking notes on oneself to be reread, writing treatises and letters to friends to help them, and keeping notebooks in order to reactivate for oneself the truths one needed.[11]

Publicatio sui meant committing to the search for truth. Records of one's life served an ethics of the self. In contrast, dataism's self-tracking is devoid of all *ethics* and *truth*; it amounts simply to a *technology* for self-monitoring. When the data collected is published and exchanged, self-tracking comes to resemble self-surveillance more and more. The subject of today's world is an entrepreneur of the self practising self-exploitation – and, by the same token, self-surveillance. The auto-exploiting subject carries around its own labour camp; here, it is perpetrator and victim at one and the same time. As a self-illuminating, self-surveilling subject, it bears its own, internal panopticon within; here, there is no difference between guard and inmate. The digitalized, networked subject is a *panopticon of itself*. This ensures that each and every person has now taken on the task of conducting perpetual auto-surveillance.

Life Logged in Full

Today, the clicks we make and the search words we type are stored. Every step is watched and recorded. A complete picture of our lives exists on the internet. Our digital habitus provides an extremely precise likeness of our persons – of our very souls. Perhaps it is even fuller and more accurate than the images we otherwise make of ourselves.

The number of web addresses now available is practically unlimited. As such, any item of use can be given its own internet address. Objects themselves are starting to transmit information. They report on our lives, activities and habits. The expansion of Web 2.0, the internet of persons, to Web 3.0, the internet of things, is bringing digital control society to completion. Web 3.0 has made it possible to log life in every aspect. Now, the very things we use every day are also surveilling us.

We are caught, so to speak, in the total memory of the Digital. Bentham's panopticon still lacked an efficient recording system; it had only

a ‘punishment log’ for penalties enacted and the reasons they occurred. Prisoners’ actual lives were not taken down. Big Brother had no way of knowing what inmates really thought or desired. In contrast to Big Brother, who could be quite forgetful, Big Data never forgets anything at all. For this reason alone, the digital panopticon is much more efficient than Bentham’s.

Indeed, in US elections, Big Data and data-mining have proven to be Columbus’s egg. Candidates obtain a 360-degree view of voters. Enormous masses of data are gathered from various sources – bought, in fact – and connected to each other in such a way that highly precise voter profiles result. In the process, clients also gain insight into voters’ private lives and their very psyche. Through *micro-targeting*, personalized messages are devised to address and *influence* voters. As the practical microphysics of power, micro-targeting is *data-driven psychopolitics*. Likewise, intelligent algorithms make it possible to predict voting behaviour and optimize candidates’ appeal. Individually calibrated messages to voters are hardly any different than personalized advertisements. More and more, voting and buying, the state and the market, citizens and consumers are coming to resemble each other. Micro-targeting is becoming the standard practice of psychopolitics.

The census, which represents a *biopolitical* practice of disciplinary society, provides material that may be used *demographically*, but not *psychologically*. Biopolitics is incapable of enabling subtle interventions in the psyche. In contrast, digital psychopolitics manages to intervene in psychic processes in a prospective fashion. Quite possibly, it is even *faster* than free will. As such, it could overtake it. If so, this would herald the *end of freedom*.[12]

The Digital Unconscious

It is possible that Big Data can even read desires we do not know we harbour. After all, under certain circumstances we develop inclinations that elude consciousness. Often, we do not even know why we suddenly experience a certain need. For instance, at a given stage of pregnancy, a woman may crave a particular product – yet this impulse marks a correlation of which she remains unaware. She buys the item, but she doesn’t know why. *That’s how it is*. Conceivably, this *that’s-how-it-is* (*Es-*

ist-so) exists in psychic proximity to the Freudian *id* (*Es*), which escapes the ego and consciousness. In this light, Big Data is making *the id into an ego* to be exploited psychopolitically. If Big Data has access to the realm of our unconscious actions and inclinations, it is possible to construct a psychopolitics that would reach deep into our psyche to exploit it.

According to Walter Benjamin, the movie camera affords access to the 'optical unconscious':

> With the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended … clearly, it is another nature which speaks to the camera as compared to the eye. 'Other' above all in the sense that a space informed by human consciousness gives way to a space informed by the unconscious … We are familiar with the movement of picking up a cigarette lighter or a spoon, but know almost nothing of what really goes on between hand and metal, and still less how this varies with different moods. This is where the camera comes into play, with all its resources for swooping and rising, disrupting and isolating, stretching or compressing a sequence, enlarging or reducing an object. It is through the camera that we first discover the optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis.[13]

One may understand Big Data in analogy to a movie camera. As a digital magnifying glass, data-mining would enlarge the picture of human actions; behind the framework of consciousness it would then disclose another scene shot through with unconscious elements. Big Data's microphysics, then, would make *actomes* visible – that is, *micro-actions* that elude detection by the waking mind. Thus, Big Data could also bring to light collective patterns of behaviour, of which individuals are unaware. This would render the *collective unconscious* accessible. In analogy to the 'optical unconscious', one could call such a microphysical or micropsychical web of relations the *digital unconscious*. As such, digital psychopolitics would be in the position to take control of mass behaviour on a level that escapes detection.

Big Business

Today, Big Data is not just taking the stage as *Big Brother* – it is also taking the form of *Big Business*. First and foremost, Big Data is a vast, commercial enterprise. Here, personal data are unceasingly monetized and commercialized. Now, people are treated and traded as packages of data for economic use. That is, human beings have become a commodity. Big Brother and Big Business have formed an alliance. The surveillance state and the market are merging.

Acxiom is a company trading in the personal data of about 300 million US citizens – in other words, practically all of them. By now, Acxiom knows more about Americans than the FBI. The company divides people into seventy categories. In the catalogue, they are offered up like goods for sale. For any need, there is something to buy. People with a low economic value are designated as ‘waste’ – that is, ‘trash’. Consumers with a higher market value are found in the group ‘Shooting Star’. From ages thirty-six to forty-five they are dynamic, get up early to go jogging, have no children but are married, like to travel, and watch *Seinfeld*.

Big Data is leading to the emergence of a new *digital class society*. Human beings assigned to the ‘waste’ category belong to the lowest class. People with a bad score are denied credit. Thus, the panopticon has been joined by a ‘ban-opticon’.[14] The panopticon kept watch over prisoners of the system who were incarcerated. The ban-opticon, on the other hand, is a dispositive that identifies persons who stand outside the system or are hostile to it, and *excludes them*. The classical panopticon served to discipline. In contrast, the ban-opticon ensures the system’s security and efficiency.

The digital ban-opticon identifies human beings without economic value as waste. Waste is something to be eliminated:

> They are all redundant. The rejects or refuse of society. To sum up, waste. ‘Waste’, by definition, is the antonym of ‘utility’; it denotes objects without possible use. Indeed, the sole accomplishment of waste is soiling and cluttering up the space that could otherwise be usefully employed. The principal purpose of the ban-opticon is to make sure that the waste is separated from decent product and earmarked for transportation to a refuse tip.[15]

Forgetting

Human memory is a narrative, an account; forgetting forms a necessary component. In contrast, digital memory is a matter of seamless addition and accumulation. Stored data admit counting, but they cannot be recounted. Storage and retrieval are fundamentally different from remembering, which is a narrative process. Likewise, autobiography constitutes a narrative: it is memorial writing. A timeline, on the other hand, recounts nothing. It simply enumerates and adds up events or information.

Memory constitutes a dynamic, living process; here, different levels of time intersect and influence each other. Memory is subject to constant rewriting and rearrangement. Freud understood human memory as a living organism too:

> As you know, I am working on the assumption that our psychic mechanism has come into being by a process of stratification: the material present in the form of memory traces being subjected from time to time to a *rearrangement* in accordance with fresh circumstances – to a *retranscription*. Thus what is essentially new about my theory is the thesis that memory is present not once but several times over, that it is laid down in various kinds of indications.[16]

In other words, *the* past – as something that remains self-identical and is always to be retrieved in the same form – does not exist. Digital memory consists of indifferent – as it were, *undead* – points of presence. It lacks the extended horizon constituting the *temporality of the living*. This means that digitalized life lacks animacy. Digital temporality belongs to the undead.

Spirit

Big Data opens up the prospect of absolute knowledge. Everything can be measured and quantified; the things of the world reveal correlations that were previously hidden. Even human behaviour is supposed to admit exact prediction. A new age of insight is being announced. Correlations are replacing causality. *That's-how-it-is* stands where *How so?* once wavered.

The data-driven quantification of reality is driving *Spirit* from the realm of knowledge.

Hegel, the philosopher of Spirit, would deem the omniscience (*All-Wissen*) that Big Data promises to be absolute ignorance (*Un-Wissen*). Hegel's *Logic* may also be read as the logic of knowledge. Here, correlation represents the most primitive level. A strong correlation between A and B means that if A changes, a change also occurs in B. But when a correlation holds – however strong it may be – one still does not know *why* this is the case. It *just is that way*. Correlation represents a relation of probability, not of necessity. It declares: A *often* occurs together with B. That is the difference between correlation and causation, which is distinguished by necessity: *A causes B*.

But causality does not stand at the highest level of knowledge. Reciprocity (*Wechselwirkung*) represents a more complex relation than causal relation. It declares: A and B condition each other mutually. A necessary connection holds between A and B. And yet, even at the level of reciprocity, the overarching context for the connection between A and B has not yet been grasped, i.e., *conceived* (*begriffen*): 'If we stop at considering a given content just from the point of view of reciprocal action, we are in fact proceeding quite unconceptually.'[17]

Only the 'Concept' brings forth knowledge. The Concept is C, which *comprehends within itself* (*in sich begreift*) A and B – here, A and B are first *conceived* (*begriffen*). The concept is the higher context surrounding A and B, which provides the foundation (*Begründung*) for the relationship between A and B. Thus, A and B stand as 'moments of a third, higher [whole]'.[18] *Knowledge* becomes possible only at the level of the Concept: 'The Concept dwells within the things themselves, it is that through which they become what they are, and to comprehend an object means therefore to become conscious of its concept.'[19] Only from the all-comprehending *Concept* C is complete *comprehension* (*Begreifen*) of the correlation between A and B possible. In contrast, Big Data affords only extremely rudimentary knowledge, that is, correlations in which nothing is *comprehended*. Big Data lacks *comprehension* – it lacks the *Concept* – and thus it *lacks Spirit*. The absolute knowledge intimated by Big Data coincides with absolute ignorance.

The Concept is a unity that *in-cludes* (*ein-schließt*) and *com-prises* (*ein-begreift*) the elements of the whole that it is. It takes the form of a *conclusion* (*Schluss*) in which everything is *comprised* and *comprehended*. 'Everything is a syllogism (*Schluss*)' means 'Everything is a *concept*.'[20] Absolute knowledge is an absolute syllogism: everything takes *conclusive* form within it. The *'definition of the Absolute'* is 'that it is the syllogism'[21] – i.e., the conclusion. But constant *addition* yields no conclusion, no syllogism, no 'putting-together'. Syllogism is not *addition*, but *narration*. The absolute con-clusion *ex-cludes* any further addition. As narration, syllogism represents the opposite of addition. Big Data is purely additive; it never comes to an end, to a conclusion. In contrast to the correlations and additions that Big Data generates, theoretical thinking represents a *narrative form of knowledge*.

The Spirit is a conclusion, a syllogism, an integral whole in which component parts are meaningfully *preserved* (*aufgehoben*). The integral whole is a conclusive form. But without Spirit, the whole world falls apart into merely additive, unincorporated elements. Spirit constitutes the world's *interiority* (*Innerlichkeit*) and *composure* (*Sammlung*): what gathers, or *composes* (*versammelt*), everything within itself. Theory is also conceptual – syllogistic – because it *comprehends* all the elements it *includes*. Ultimately, the 'end of theory' that Chris Anderson has trumpeted means *taking leave of Spirit*. Big Data makes Spirit – that is, thinking and thought – wither and die. Human science – *Geisteswissenschaft* – that is purely data-driven is, in fact, no longer human; it has no *Geist*, or Spirit. *Totalized data-knowledge amounts to absolute ignorance: the absolute zero of Spirit*.

The *Science of Logic* declares: 'The syllogism is what is *rational*, and it is *everything* that is rational'[22] – it is a conclusion, or *Schluss*. For Hegel, the syllogism is not a category of formal logic. A syllogism follows when the beginning and end of a process form a meaningful set of relations – a unity that makes sense. Unlike mere addition, then, narration is a syllogism. *Knowledge* – the state of *knowing* – is a syllogism. Rituals and ceremonies are syllogistic forms too. They represent a narrative process. As such, they have their own temporality, their own rhythm and pace. As narratives, they defy acceleration. But when all syllogistic forms fall apart, everything dissolves; nothing has a *stay*. In a world where everything has become additive, where all narrative tension – any vertical tautness – has gone missing, total acceleration sets in.

Today, our perceptive apparatus itself is incapable of arriving at any conclusion: it just clicks its way through the endless, digital net. Our senses are completely distracted. Yet only contemplative lingering manages to achieve any meaningful end. *Shutting one's eyes* offers a symbol for arriving at a conclusion. Abrupt change from image to image, from information to information, has made any such contemplative conclusion impossible. If all that qualifies as reasonable is a syllogism – a conclusion – then our era, the age of Big Data, is an *epoch without reason*.

The Event

When the statistical method was discovered in the seventeenth century, it captivated scientists, gamblers, poets and philosophers alike. Enthusiastically, they embraced statistical probability and regularity. There can be no doubt that such euphoria admits comparison with the fortunes of Big Data today. *Then*, statistics inspired renewed trust in a higher power for people as they confronted the contingencies of the world. For instance, an eighteenth-century treatise by John Arbuthnot was called *An Argument for Divine Providence, taken from the Regularity observ'd in the British Births of both Sexes*. On the basis of the statistically determined predominance of male infants relative to female ones, philosophers saw the hand of God at work – and found further reason to justify war.

Even Kant got carried away by the possibilities that statistical calculation afforded; he incorporated the lawful order it allowed him to discern into his teleological view of history. On the one hand, he posited the existence of free will. On the other, he restricted it. Kant affirmed that phenomena of free will – that is, human actions – are determined by general laws of nature, like every other natural fact. If one considers the play of freedom in human will 'on a large scale', lawfulness may be discerned. As unruly as the conduct of individual subjects seems to be, a 'steady progression though slow development of … original predispositions' is recognizable at the level of the species. To make this point, Kant refers to statistics:

> Thus marriages, the births that come from them and deaths, since the free will of human beings has so great an influence on them, seem to be subject to no rule in accordance with which their number

> could be determined in advance through calculation; and yet the annual tables of them in large countries prove that they happen just as much in accordance with constant laws of nature, as weather conditions which are so inconstant, whose individual occurrence one cannot previously determine, but which on the whole do not fail to sustain the growth of plants, the course of streams, and other natural arrangements in a uniform uninterrupted course. Individual human beings and even whole nations think little about the fact, since while each pursues its own aim in its own way and one often contrary to the other, they are proceeding unnoticed, as by a guiding thread, according to an aim of nature, which is unknown to them, and are laboring at its promotion.[23]

In essence, the first Enlightenment was committed to belief in statistical knowledge. Rousseau's *volonté générale* results from statistical-mathematic operations too. The general will takes form *without any communication at all*.[24] It results from statistical averages:

> There is often a considerable difference between the will of all and the general will: the latter looks only to the common interest, the former looks to private interest, and is nothing but a sum of particular wills; but if, from these same wills, one takes away the pluses and the minuses which cancel each other out, what is left as the sum of the differences is the general will.[25]

Rousseau stresses that arriving at the general will requires no communication; indeed, it excludes it. Communication distorts statistical objectivity. Accordingly, he would like to prohibit political parties and associations. The democracy he envisions is democracy without discourse or communication. Proceeding statistically is supposed to yield a synthesis of quantity and truth.[26] Rousseau offers a biopolitical response to the question of the features defining a good government. He avoids approaching the question morally. For him, the purpose of a political association is simply the protection and welfare of its members. The surest sign of success is the increase of population. Unquestionably, for him, the best government is the one in which the citizens 'become populous and

multiply the most'. Thus, he sounds the call: 'Calculators, it is now up to you: count, measure, compare.'[27]

Today's euphoria about Big Data strongly resembles the euphoria about statistics in the eighteenth century – which did not last for long, however. Statistics was surely the Big Data of the eighteenth century. Before long, resistance mounted against statistical reason – above all, on the part of Romanticism. The fundamental affect of Romanticism is horror at everything average and normal. The singular, improbable and sudden stand opposed to what is merely probable in statistical terms. Romanticism cultivated the outlandish, abnormal and the extreme in order to counter statistical normality.[28]

Nietzsche also shared this abhorrence for statistical reason:

> Statistics proves that there are laws in history. Yes, it proves how vulgar and disgustingly uniform the masses are. You should have kept statistics in Athens! Then you would have sensed the difference! The more inferior and un-individual the masses are, the more rigorous the statistical law. If the multitude has a more refined and nobler composition, then the law immediately goes to the devil. And way up at the top, where the great minds are, you no longer can make any calculations at all: when, for example, have great artists ever gotten married! You are hopeless, you who want to discover a law in this. Thus, to the extent that there are laws in history, they are worthless, and history itself – that is, everything that has occurred – is worthless.[29]

Statistics does not take into consideration 'great active individuals on the stage of history, but only … the supernumeraries [*Statisten*]'.[30] Nietzsche inveighs against a version of history 'that takes the great drives of the masses to be what is important and that views all great men merely as their expression, as the bubbles that become visible on the surface of the flood'.[31]

For Nietzsche, the figures of statistics prove only that man is a herd animal. He observes that 'die Menschen *zunehmen* im *Gleichwerden*'.[32] This means both that 'people are increasingly growing equal' and that 'people *batten* [i.e., grow fat] as they *become the same*.' Such

Gleichschaltung also characterizes our contemporary society of transparency and information. When everything is made visible at once, deviations can scarcely occur. Transparency entails a compulsion to conform, which eliminates the Other, the Alien and the Deviant. Above all, Big Data makes collective patterns of behaviour visible. Dataism is augmenting *Zunehmen im Gleichwerden*, or hypertrophied sameness. Data-mining does not differ from statistics in any fundamental way. The correlations it lays bare represent only what is likely in statistical terms. It calculates average values. As such, Big Data has no access to what is unique. Big Data is wholly *blind to the event*. Not what is statistically likely, but what is unlikely – the *singular*, the *event* – will shape history, in other words, the *future* of mankind. Thus, Big Data is *blind to the future* too.

12.

Beyond the Subject

What Nietzsche refers to as the ‘naturification’ (*Vernatürlichung*) of the human being includes ‘readiness for what is absolutely sudden and thwarting (*das absolut Plötzliche und Durchkreuzende*)’.[1] The *event*, which annuls what has held until now – the standing order – proves just as incalculable and abrupt as a *natural disaster* or *act of God*. It defies all calculation and prediction. When it occurs, an *entirely new state of affairs* begins. The *event* brings into play an *outside*, which breaks the subject open and wrests it from subjection. Events represent breaks and discontinuities; they open up *new spaces for action*.

Following Nietzsche’s lead, Foucault also advances a conception of history that ‘deals with events in terms of their most unique characteristics, their most acute manifestations’.[2] ‘Event’, for Foucault, means ‘the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary against those who had once used it’.[3] When an event occurs, one *suddenly* speaks *another language*. It entails a *break* with all *certainty that has held until now* inasmuch as it *calls* to life a wholly different constellation of Being. Events are turns (*Kehren*), where a reversal – an overthrow – of domination occurs. The event means that something takes *place* – something that was wholly absent from conditions beforehand.

In contrast to *experiencing* (*Erlebnis*), *experience* (*Erfahrung*) is founded on discontinuity. Experience means transformation. In an

interview, Foucault remarked that for Nietzsche, Blanchot and Bataille, *experience* 'has the function of wrenching the subject from itself, of seeing to it that the subject is no longer itself, or that it is brought to its annihilation or its dissolution'.[4] Being a subject means being subjected, being cast under, by a higher instance. *Experience* tears the subject out from subjection – out of its downcast state. It signifies the opposite of the neoliberal psychopolitics of *experiencing* or *emotion*, which only ensnares the subject deeper and deeper in the state of subjection and subjugation.

Following Foucault, the art of living may be understood as a practice of freedom, bringing forth an entirely different mode of existence. It unfolds as de-psychologization: 'The art of living is the art of killing psychology, of creating with oneself and with others unnamed individualities, beings, relations, qualities. If one can't manage to do that in one's life, that life is not worth living.'[5] The art of living stands opposed to the 'psychological terror' through which subjugating subjectivation occurs.

Neoliberal psychopolitics is a technology of domination that stabilizes and perpetuates the prevailing system by means of psychological programming and steering. Accordingly, the art of living, as the praxis of freedom, must proceed by way of de-psychologization. This serves to disarm psychopolitics, which is a means of effecting submission. When the subject is de-psychologized – indeed, *de-voided* (*ent-leert*) – it opens onto a mode of existence that still has no name: an unwritten future.

13.

Idiotism

In his 1980 course on Spinoza, Deleuze observed: ‘To the letter, I’d say they play the fool [*ils font les idiots*]. Play the fool. Playing the fool, that’s always been one function of philosophy.’[1] One of the roles of philosophy is to play the fool, or idiot. From its inception, philosophy has been closely tied to idiotism. Every philosopher who has brought forth a new idiom – a new language, a new way of thinking – has necessarily been an idiot. Only the idiot has access to the *wholly Other*. Idiotism discloses a *field of immanence of events and singularities* for thought; this field eludes subjectivation and psychologization altogether.

The history of philosophy is a history of idiotisms. Socrates knows only that he does not know; he is an idiot. Likewise, Descartes – who casts doubt on everything – is an idiot. *Cogito ergo sum* is idiotic. It takes an inner contraction of thinking to make a new beginning possible. Descartes *thinks* by *thinking Thought* (*das Denken denkt*). By relating (only) to itself, Thought regains a virginal state. Deleuze places the Cartesian idiot in opposition to an idiot of another kind:

> The old idiot wanted indubitable truths at which he could arrive by himself: in the meantime he would doubt everything … The new idiot has no wish for indubitable truths; he … wills the absurd – this is not the same image of thought. The old idiot wanted truth, but the

> new idiot wants to turn the absurd into the highest power of thought.[2]

Today, it seems, the type of the outsider – the idiot, the fool – has all but vanished from society. Thoroughgoing digital networking and communication have massively amplified the compulsion to conform. The attendant violence of consensus is suppressing idiotisms. Botho Strauss pinpoints the difference between contemporary conformism and bourgeois convention of old: 'For him, the idiot, it's as if everyone else were speaking in subtle attunement with each other: brought down to the most agreeable level [*verträglichsten Stimmungsgrad*] … This is a far more implacable convention than any convention known before, in bourgeois times.'[3]

The idiot is idiosyncratic. Literally, idiosyncrasy refers to a specific and peculiar mixture of the body's humours and the oversensitivity this entails. When communication is to be accelerated, idiosyncrasy poses an obstacle inasmuch as it amounts to an immunological defence against the Other. Idiosyncrasy stands in the way of unbounded communicative exchange. Accordingly, immunosuppression is necessary for acceleration to proceed. But now, immune responses are subjected to massive suppression so that information will circulate faster and capital will accelerate. Communication achieves maximum velocity when the Same reacts to the Same. In contrast, the resistance and recalcitrance of otherness, of foreignness, troubles and impedes the smooth communication of the Same. In the *Inferno of the Same*, communication attains its highest speed.

In light of compulsive and coercive communication and conformism, idiotism represents a practice of freedom. By nature, the idiot is unallied, un-networked, and uninformed. The idiot inhabits the *immemorial outside*, which escapes communication and networking altogether: 'The idiot spins about like a plucked rose in the whirling river of single-minded people – people in consent, those who have been incorporated and belong to a wondrous, common understanding.'[4]

The idiot is a modern-day heretic. Etymologically, *heresy* means 'choice'. Thus, the heretic is one who commands *free choice*: the courage to deviate from orthodoxy. As a heretic, the idiot represents a figure of resistance opposing the violence of consensus. The idiot preserves the magic of the outsider. Today, in light of increasingly coercive conformism, it is more urgent than ever to heighten *heretical consciousness*.

Idiotism stands opposed to the neoliberal power of domination: total communication and total surveillance. The idiot does not 'communicate'. Indeed, he communicates with the In-communicable. As such, the idiot veils himself in silence. Idiotism erects *spaces for guarding silence* (*Freiräume des Schweigens*), *quiet, and solitude*, where it is still possible to say what really deserves to be said. Deleuze already called for such a *politics of silence* in 1995. He directed it against neoliberal psychopolitics, which forces communication and disclosure:

> It's not a problem of getting people to express themselves but of providing little gaps of solitude and silence in which they might eventually find something to say. Repressive forces don't stop people from expressing themselves but rather force them to express themselves. What a relief to have nothing to say, the right to say nothing, because only then is there a chance of framing the rare, and ever rarer, thing that might be worth saying.[5]

The *idiot savant* has access to knowledge of a different order. He raises himself above the horizontal plane – above *merely being informed and networked*. 'The term *idiot savant*, as the autistic first were called, should perhaps be freed up and used for those adventurers who are not simply tied to one another, but to something else [*für jene Abenteurer, die anders verbunden sind als nur untereinander*].'[6] Idiotism opens up virginal space – forging the distance required by thought so that speaking may occur in an entirely different manner. The *idiot savant* lives from the faraway – like a stylite. Vertical tension enables him to find *higher agreement*: receptivity to *events*, *broadcasts* (*Sendungen*) *from the future*: 'Stylite, pillar dweller, antenna. The waves of the overflowing message generate, in the mouth of the holy man, the same noise [*Rauschen*] as the faint signals the idiot receives from the world.'[7]

Intelligence means *choosing-between* (*inter-legere*). It is not entirely free in so far as it is caught in a *between*, which depends on the system in operation. Intelligence has no access to *outside*, because it makes a choice between options in a system. Therefore, intelligence does not really exercise *free choice*: it can only *select* among the offerings the system affords. Intelligence follows the logic of a system. It is system-immanent. A given system defines a given intelligence. Accordingly, intelligence has no

access to what is *wholly Other*. It inhabits a horizontal plane. In contrast, the idiot has contact with the vertical dimension inasmuch as he takes leave of the prevailing system – that is, abandons intelligence. 'The inside of idiocy is delicate and transparent, like a dragonfly's wing – it glistens with intelligence that has been overcome.'[8]

In his final work – *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life* – Deleuze elevates immanence to a formula for beatitude: 'We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else. It is not immanence to life, but the immanent that is in nothing is itself a life. A life is the immanence of immanence, absolute immanence: it is complete power, complete bliss.'[9] Immanence is something immanent that 'is in nothing' because it does not occur in something else – it exists only in itself. As such, it is the 'immanence of immanence'. It is *subject* to nothing; rather, it is self-sufficient. No order of domination can be erected on this level of life's immanence (*Immanenzebene des Lebens*). In contrast, Capital manifests itself as transcendence: it estranges life from itself. *Immanence as life* suspends this alienating relationship.

Pure immanence is the *void*, which can neither be psychologized nor subjectivized. Immanent life is *lighter and richer – indeed, freer* – for such emptiness.[10] The idiot is not defined by individuality or subjectivity, but by singularity. As such, the idiot is similar in nature to the child, who is not yet an individual, not yet a person. The child's existence is not determined by individual qualities so much as impersonal *events*:

> For example, very small children all resemble one another and have hardly any individuality, but they have singularities: a smile, a gesture, a funny face – not subjective qualities. Small children, through all their sufferings and weaknesses, are infused with an immanent life that is pure power and even bliss.[11]

The idiot is like Deleuze's *'homo tantum'* – one who 'no longer has a name, though he can be mistaken for no other'.[12] The sphere of immanence to which the idiot gains admittance is the matrix of de-subjectivation and de-psychologization. It is *negativity*, wresting the subject out of itself and liberating it into the 'immensity of an empty time'.[13] The idiot does not

exist as a subject – he is ‘more like a flower: an existence simply open to light’.[14]

Notes

1. The Crisis of Freedom

1 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology, Part One*, ed. C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 2004), 83.

2 Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Vintage, 1973), 650.

3 Ibid.

4 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1976), 255.

5 Walter Benjamin, 'Capitalism as Religion', in *Selected Writings, Volume 1: 1913–1926*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 288–91, here 288.

6 'Mit dem Recht auf informationelle Selbstbestimmung wären eine Gesellschaftsordnung und eine diese ermöglichende Rechtsordnung nicht vereinbar, in der Bürger nicht mehr wissen können, wer was wann und bei welcher Gelegenheit über sie weiß' (Urteile des BVerfG zum Datenschutz, at datenschutzbeauftragter-online.de).

3. The Mole and the Snake

1 Gilles Deleuze, 'Postscript on Control Societies', in *Negotiations 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 177–82.

2 Ibid., 179.

3 Ibid.

4. Biopolitics

1 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 136.

2 Ibid., 139.

3 Ibid., 139–40.

4 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995), 130.

5 Ibid., 137.

6 Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 139.

5. Foucault's Dilemma

1 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2010), 22.

2 Alexandra Rau has problematically defined the psychopolitics of the neoliberal regime as a biopolitical form of government: 'If psychotechnics can theoretically be assigned to disciplinary power, I would like to view "psychopolitics", in contrast, as a biopolitical form of government' (*Psychopolitik. Macht, Subjekt und Arbeit in der neoliberalen Gesellschaft* [Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 2010], 298). This is as fraught as Thomas Lemke's effort to do the same. Cf. *Gouvernementalität der Gegenwart. Studien zur Ökonomisierung des Sozialen*, ed. Thomas Lemke et al. (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2000).

3 Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 185.

4 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 4.

5 Michel Foucault, 'The Birth of Social Medicine', in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, Vol. 3, *Power*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: New Press, 2000), 137.

6 Bernard Stiegler, *Taking Care of Youth and the Generations*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 31.

7 Ibid., 126.

8 Ibid., 171.

9 Ibid., 176.

10 Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 10–11.

11 Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 19.

12 That said, Foucault sensed the interrelation between the technology of the self and the technology of power: 'I think that if one wants to analyze the genealogy of the subject in Western civilization, he has to take into account not only techniques of domination but also techniques of the self. Let's say: he has to take into account the interaction between those two types of techniques – techniques of domination and techniques of the self. He has to take into account the points where the technologies of domination of individuals over one another have recourse to processes by which the individual acts upon himself. And conversely, he has to take into account the points where the techniques of self are integrated into structures of coercion or domination' (*About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self: Two Lectures at Dartmouth College, 1980*, trans. Graham Burchell [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016], 25).

13 Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 230.

6. Healing as Killing

1 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic* (*with the* Zusätze), trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 236.

2 Cf. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008).

3 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Basic Writings*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 344.

4 Quoted in Barbara Ehrenreich, *Bright-sided: How Positive Thinking Is Undermining America* (New York: Picador, 2010), 94.

5 Cf. Byung-Chul Han, *Topologie der Gewalt* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2011), esp. 118–27.

7. Shock

1 Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2008), 44.

2 Ibid., 60.

9. Emotional Capitalism

1 Eva Illouz, *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 1.

2 Ibid., 2.

3 Quoted in André Gorz, *The Immaterial: Knowledge, Value and Capital*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Seagull Books, 2010), 6.

4 Quoted in Illouz, *Cold Intimacies*, 22.

10. Gamification

1 Available at krisis.org.

2 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 3*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1981), 958–9.

3 Marx, *Grundrisse*, 711.

4 Ibid., 711–12.

5 Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations*, trans. Jeff Fort (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

6 Martin Heidegger, *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected 'Problems' of 'Logic'*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 146.

11. Big Data

1 Jeremy Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, ed. Miran Božovi (London: Verso, 1995), 95.

2 Ibid.

3 David Brooks, 'The Philosophy of Data', *New York Times*, 4 February 2013.

4 Quoted in Rüdiger Campe, *The Game of Probability: Literature and Calculation from Pascal to Kleist*, trans. Ellwood H. Wiggins, Jr. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 353.

5 Ibid.

6 Chris Anderson, 'The End of Theory', *Wired*, 23 June 2008. On the term 'dataism', see, also, Alexander Pschera et al., *Trend-Update*, Vol. 10 (Berlin, 2011).

7 Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), xvii.

8 Tristan Tzara, 'Lecture on Dada', in *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology*, ed. Robert Motherwell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 246–51, here 250.

9 Cf. Byung-Chul Han, 'Big Data: Dataismus und Nihilismus', ZEIT-Online, 27 September 2011.

10 Evgeny Morozov, *To Save Everything, Click Here: The Folly of Technological Solutionism* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2014), 227.

11 Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, 27.

12 Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier, *Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2013), 175.

13 Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty and Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 37.

14 Zygmunt Bauman and David Lyon, *Liquid Surveillance: A Conversation* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 62.

15 Ibid., 66.

16 Sigmund Freud, *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887–1904*, trans. Jeffrey Mousaieff Masson (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1985), 207.

17 Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic*, 231.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., 245.

20 Ibid., 257.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 256.

23 Immanuel Kant, 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim', in *Anthropology, History and Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 107–20, here 108. Kant took his information on rates of marriage, birth and death from statistics gathered between 1740 and 1770 – likely from Johann Peter Süßmilch's treatise, *Die göttliche Ordnung in den Veränderungen des menschlichen Geschlechts, aus der Geburt, dem Tode und der Fortpflanzung desselben erwiesen*. Cf. Rüdiger Campe, 'Wahrscheinliche Geschichte – poetologische Kategorie und mathematische Funktion', in *Poetologien des Wissens um 1800*, ed. J. Vogl (Munich: Fink, 1998), 209–30, here 220.

24 Manfred Schneider examines the statistical aspect of the *volonté générale* in his essay 'Was heißt "Die Mehrheit entscheidet"?', in *Urteilen/Entscheiden*, ed. C. Vismann and Th. Weitin (Munich: Fink, 2006), 154–74, here 161.

25 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 60.

26 Schneider, 'Was heißt "Die Mehrheit entscheidet?"', 162.

27 Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 105.

28 Cf. Manfred Schneider, 'Serapiontische Probabilistik. Einwände gegen die Vernunft des größten Haufens', in *Hoffmanneske Geschichte. Zu einer Literaturwissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft*, ed. G. Neumann (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005), 259–76.

29 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unpublished Writings from the Period of Unfashionable Observations*, trans. Richard T. Gray (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 208.

30 Ibid., 256.

31 Ibid., 208.

32 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1880–1882, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 9 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 294.

12. Beyond the Subject

1 Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1880–1882, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 9, 529.

2 Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 154.

3 Ibid.

4 Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984: Power*, Vol. 3, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: New Press, 2001), 241.

5 Michel Foucault, 'Conversation avec Wener Schroeter', in *Dits et écrits, 1954–1988, IV: 1980–1988* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 251–60, here 256.

13. Idiotism

1 Gilles Deleuze, Spinoza cours du 02/12/80, at www2.univparis8.fr, and Philippe Mengue, *Faire l'idiot. La politique de Deleuze* (Paris: Germina, 2013).

2 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 62.

3 Botho Strauss, *Lichter des Toren. Der Idiot und seine Zeit* (Munich: Diederichs, 2013), 10.

4 Ibid., 11.

5 Deleuze, 'Mediators', in *Negotiations*, 121–34, here 129.

6 Strauss, *Lichter des Toren*, 11.

7 Ibid., 165.

8 Ibid., 7. In his treatise on idiocy, Clément Rosset explicitly distinguishes stupidity (*sottise*) from unintelligence (*inintelligence*). In so doing, he ascribes a creative potential to stupidity: 'Stupidity … is generally assimilated to unintelligence, which is deemed the opposite of intelligence. This means opposing *attentive*, *nimble*, and *alert* intelligence to stupidity, which is understood as *sluggish*, *anesthetic*, and *mummified* … In fact, there is nothing so *attentive*, *nimble*, and *alert* as stupidity' (*Le Réel. Traité de l'idiotie* [Paris: Minuit, 1977], 144). Boundless openness and receptivity distinguish stupidity, whereas lack of intelligence means limitation. Unintelligence is poor in experience. It has no access to the event: 'Unintelligence closes doors: it signals that certain paths of approach to such or such knowledge are prohibited, thereby narrowing the field of experience.' In contrast, 'stupidity opens onto everything: it makes anything at all into an object of notice and possible engagement.' It is a 'calling, or better, a priesthood, with its idols, officiants, and faithful' (145).

9 Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 27.

10 On the concept of emptiness, see Byung-Chul Han, *Philosophie des Zen-Buddhimus* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002) and *Abwesen. Zur Kultur und Philosophie des Fernen Ostens* (Berlin:

Merve, 2007).

11 Deleuze, *Pure Immanence*, 30.

12 Ibid., 28–9.

13 Ibid., 29.

14 Strauss, *Lichter des Toren*, 175.